

**BENENSON STRATEGY GROUP**

14 EAST 60TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10022  
TEL 212 702 8777 FAX 212 750 6518

**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** Joel Benenson

**RE:** Public Polling on Health Care

**DATE:** March 10, 2010

- Recent public polling shows a trend of support starting to grow for the health care plan now under consideration while opposition to reform is on the decline. In fact, most recent public polls show support and opposition to the plan is roughly even.

**Support/Oppose President's Reform Plan in Selected Public Polls**

<b>Poll</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Support/Oppose</b>	<b>Margin</b>
AP/GfK	3/3-3/8	41/43	-2
Gallup	3/4-3/7	45/48	-3
Kaiser	2/11-2/16	43/43	Even
ABC/WashPo	2/4-2/8	46/49	-3

- When comparing the [Pollster.com](http://Pollster.com) average from the three months prior to the President's State of the Union speech to the five weeks since then, the data shows a 13-point shift in "favoring vs. opposing health care." (The averages for both of these time periods filters out Rasmussen polling, which Pollster.com has described as having a strong "house effect" that leans Republican).
  - ✓ Since February 1, this average now stands at 44% favor/45% oppose for a net of -1%.
  - ✓ In the preceding three months this average was -14, at 38% favor and 52% oppose.
- More noteworthy is that recent polling that shows solid majorities of Americans want action on this issue and reject the status quo as an acceptable course:
  - ✓ Franklin and Marshall finds that an overwhelming 75% majority believes the health care system is in need of reform while only 20% do not believe so. (Franklin and Marshall, 2/8)
  - ✓ Shortly after the President's State of the Union speech and even prior to the President's health care summit, an ABC/Washington Post poll found that a solid 63% majority wanted lawmakers in Washington to "keep trying to pass a comprehensive health care reform plan" while just 34% thought they should "give up on comprehensive health care reform." (ABC/WashPo, 2/8)
  - ✓ Ipsos finds that among those who oppose health care reform, a full 37% say they oppose it because they believe current proposals "don't go far enough" to reform health care. (Ipsos/McClatchy, 2/28).

- The data show that Americans not only want action, but clear majorities support the central components of the President's plan, according to a recent Newsweek poll which found that:
  - ✓ 81% favor creating a new insurance exchange that allows people without insurance to buy at competitive rates, while only 13% oppose;
  - ✓ 76% favor requiring health insurance companies to cover pre-existing conditions while just 19% oppose;
  - ✓ 75% favor requiring most businesses to offer health insurance to their employees, with tax incentives for small business owners while only 20% oppose. (Newsweek, 2/18)
- The American people also continue to put much more trust in President Obama than they do in Congressional Republicans to "recommend the right thing" on health care.
  - ✓ A recent Gallup poll finds 49% say they are confident in the President to recommend the right thing for health care reform while just 32% say the same for Congressional Republicans. (Gallup, 3/3)
  - ✓ And Public Opinion Strategies (a respected Republican firm) found that more Americans believe Democrats would do a better job dealing with health care than Republicans by a margin of 37-32. (POS, 2/18)
- This trust in President Obama on the issue is further bolstered by the release of his own plan for reform. A recent Ipsos/McClatchy poll that followed the release of the President's new proposal found that while initial awareness of the plan was still relatively low, those with knowledge of the President's new plan see it as an improvement over earlier Congressional bills by a margin of almost three-to-one:
  - ✓ Of the 42% who were aware of the President's plan, 30% say the President's plan is better than earlier ones being discussed. Just 11% say worse and 57% say "about the same". (Ipsos/McClatchy, 2/28)
  - ✓ While this initial awareness was relatively modest, the data suggests that as people learn more about the President's plan, especially once the din surrounding the political debate fades post-passage, support for its central components and reforms will only increase.
- Lastly, this recent Ipsos poll also showed that Republicans are widely seen as obstructionists who are not working to fix the broken status quo on health care:
  - ✓ When asked directly, just 36% say Republicans in Congress are working hard to find compromise with Democrats on health care, while 57% say they are deliberately avoiding compromise in order to obstruct the bill in any form. (Ipsos/McClatchy, 2/28)